Your Car's Safety Features

Seats & Seat-Backs
Your car's seats are designed to keep you in a comfortable, upright position so you can take full advantage of the protection offered by seat belts and the energy absorbing materials in the seats.

How you adjust your seats and seat-backs can also affect your safety. For example, sitting too close to the steering wheel or dashboard increases the risk of you or your passenger being injured by striking the inside of the car, or by an inflating airbag.

Reclining a seat-back too far reduces the seat belt's effectiveness and increases the chance that the seat's occupant will slide under the seat belt in a crash and be seriously injured.

What you should do: Move the front seats as far back as possible, and keep adjustable seat-backs in an upright position whenever the car is moving.

Head Restraints
Head restraints can help protect you from whiplash and other injuries. For maximum protection, the back of your head should rest against the center of the head restraint.

Door Locks
Keeping your doors locked reduces the chance of being thrown out of the car during a crash. It also helps prevent occupants from accidentally opening a door and falling out, and outsiders from unexpectedly opening your doors.

Pre-Drive Safety Checklist
To make sure you and your passengers get the maximum protection from your car's safely features, check the following each time before you drive away:

- All adults, and children who have outgrown child safety seats, are wearing their seat belts and wearing them properly (see page 14).
- Any infant or small child is properly restrained in a child seat in the back seat (see page 19).
- Front seat occupants are sitting upright and as far back as possible from the steering wheel and dashboard (see page 12).
- Seat-backs are upright (see page 13).
- Head restraints are properly adjusted (see page 14).
- All doors are closed and locked (see page 12).
- All cargo is properly stored or secured (see page 166).

The rest of this section gives more detailed information about how you can maximize your safety.

Remember, however, that no safety system can prevent all injuries or deaths that can occur in severe crashes, even when seat belts are properly worn and the airbags deploy.